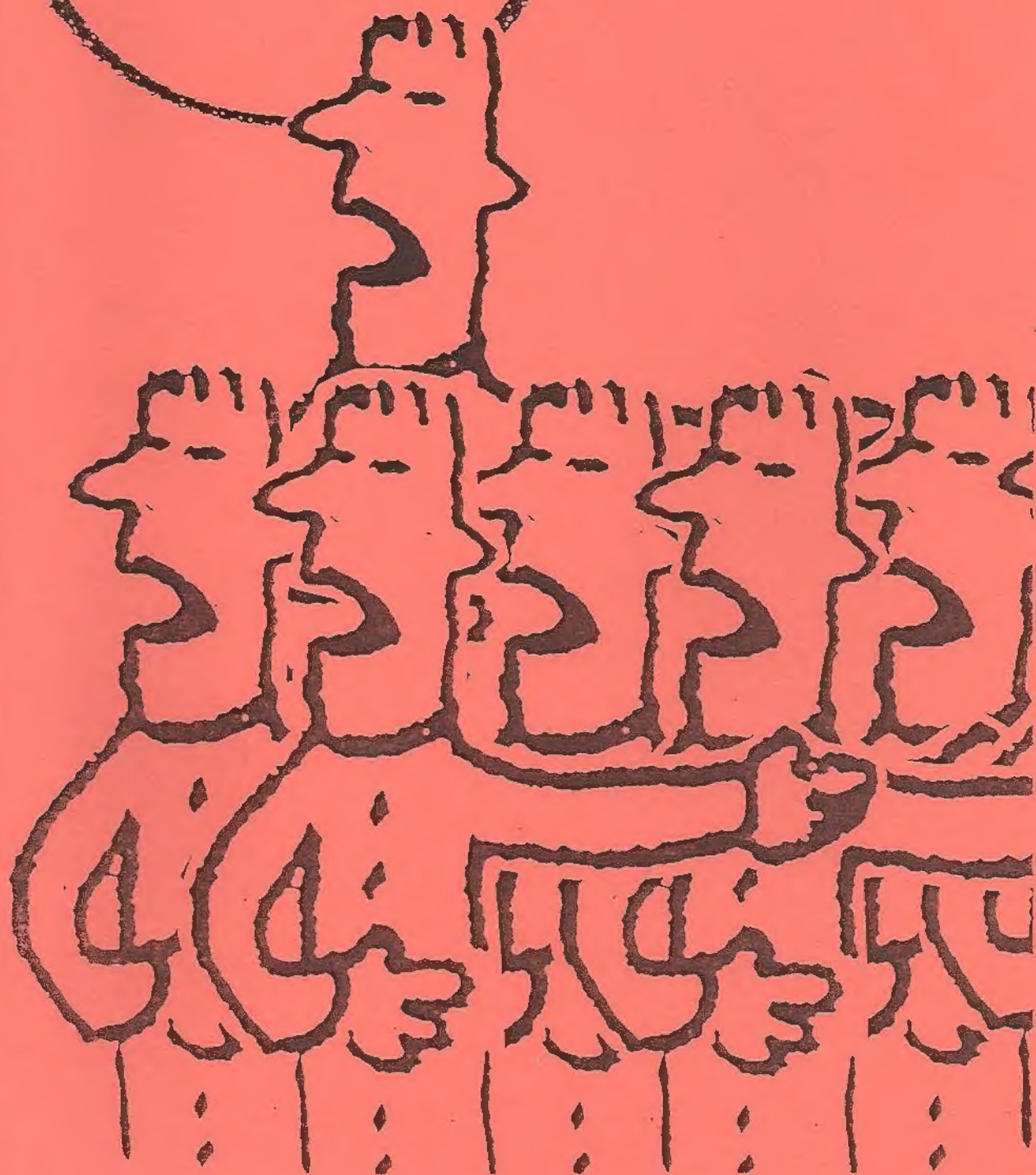




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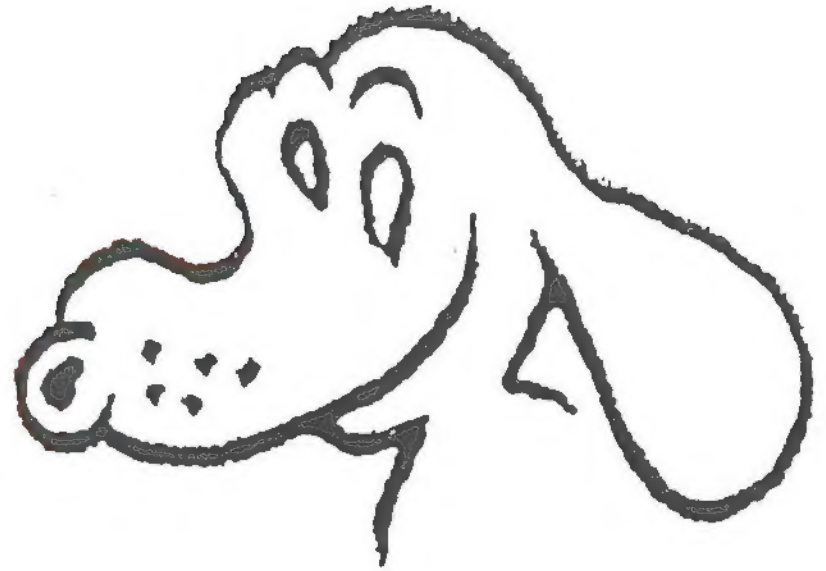
## BEZANGO WA 985 #3

Hidden in the Coastal Mountains of Southwest Washington State is an obscure town far from Interstate 5, far from the sphere of influence of a major metropolitan region. Welcome to Bezango, Washington. Allow me to introduce you to a few of our citizens.



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3rd ed.



This dog served a record four terms as Mayor of Bezango. Well, almost four terms. In his final stint he ran away. They say he was last seen up in the hills, diving into the tunnel of a mountain beaver he was chasing. There is another legend he went feral, and if you listen hard at at night, you can pick out his call in the coyote chorus.

Since Washington State has some sort of oppressive law keeping animals off the ballot, we always had to write in his name. He never failed to win big. Best Mayor in Bezango history-- he never lied, gladhanded, held executive sessions, hid behind consultants and administrators, or posed as some sort of "insider" expert. He did urinate in public, though.

He has been gone for quite awhile now. We shall never see his like again.



Our current Mayor is Jerry Thiessen. I wish I could relate some humorous, eccentric and endearing quality about him that would add to the uniqueness of Bezango. But, sad to say, he is like any other small town Babbitt.

Wait a minute, there is one small detail that sets him apart. He is the only male who carries an umbrella in public. See, Bezango has more days of overcast and rain than almost anywhere else in these United States. Even so, most men would not be caught dead with an umbrella. We wear duck-billed hats. And we wear them with the bill in **front**, as God intended. If you show up wearing a duck-billed hat backwards, like they do in Seattle, most people in Bezango will think you are some kind of moron, although Mr. Duckwart likes to use the term "fashion sheep."

I don't know which one is a worse social blunder, the backwards hat or the umbrella, but after all these years, Mayor Thiessen is still clueless about the latter.

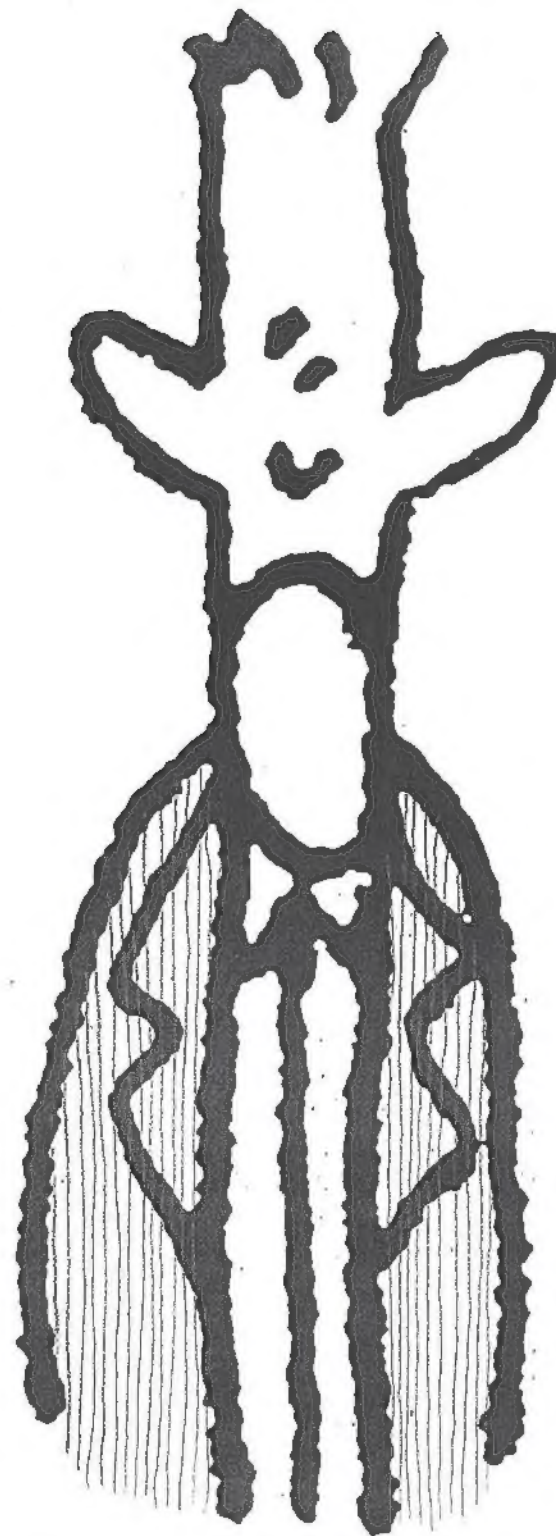


There is an unwritten law in Bezango that if you run for Mayor and lose, you move out of town. Over the years many well-meaning souls have thrown their duck-billed hats in the ring, only to be rejected by the voters. And these runners-up all go to the same place-- the town of Winnehutt, which is the nearest community of any size. It is about 30 miles away as the crow flies, but much longer by road.

Of course, given the fact that it is populated by losers, we call that town "Whineybutt." But we have to admit, Winnehutt has many features we of Bezango look at with envy. For openers, you can find Winnehutt on the Washington State highway map. It has a traffic light that turns green and red and yellow and everything.

And worst of all, they beat us every year, I mean **every** year at baseball. It must be their extra incentive for having a population of political losers. But we love the game anyway. And why not? We get to wear duck-billed hats and chew tobacco while playing, and we can still call them Whineybutts.

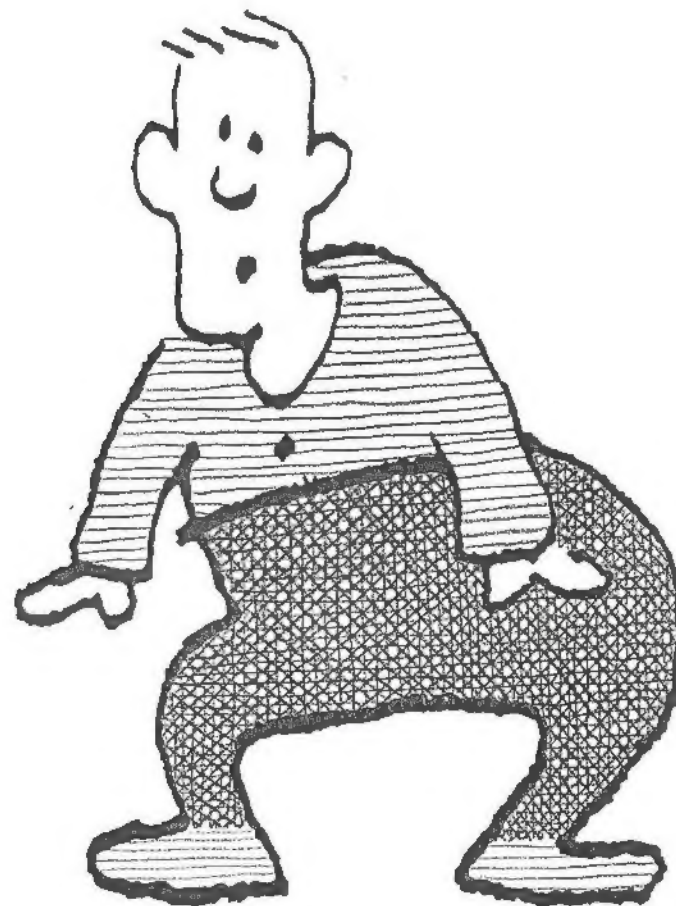
The current Mayor of Winnehutt is Marcus Flemm, who was the last guy to lose to the dog many years ago. Here he is. I think he's still miffed.





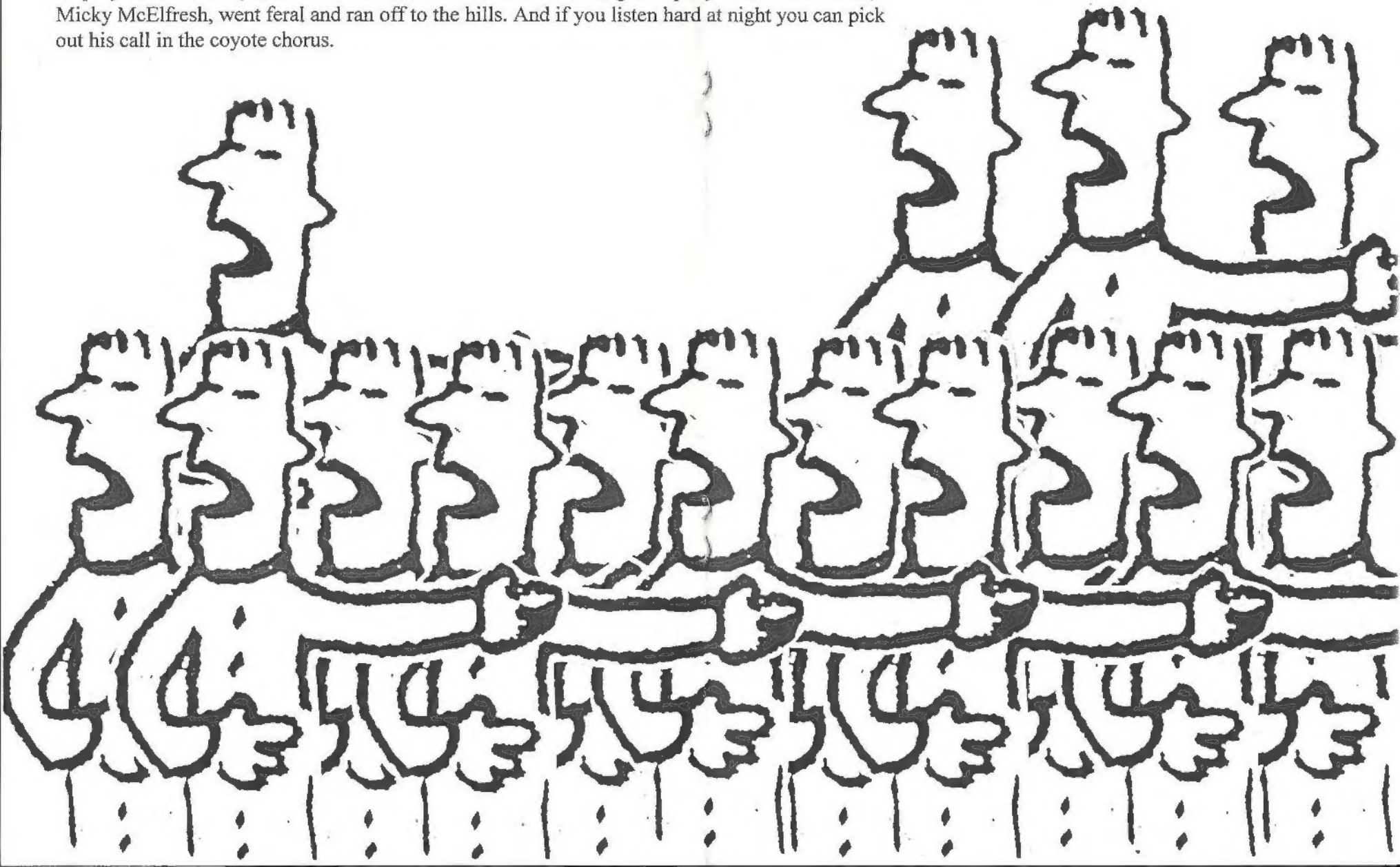
We have a City Council as well. The most inventive guy in that body is Richard Nixon. No, not the late President. This Richard Nixon is still alive. He actually occupies two City Council seats. In the last election he painted a little face on his hand and named it "Handy Nixon," and somehow got this name on the ballot. Handy ran without an opponent. Now Richard has two votes. He'll make a motion, then change into a high squeaky voice and in a very bad job of ventriloquism have "Handy" say, "And I'll second that excellent motion." Oddly enough, no one seems to notice or object. Except, of course, for Grady Sneedmoss, but you haven't met him yet.

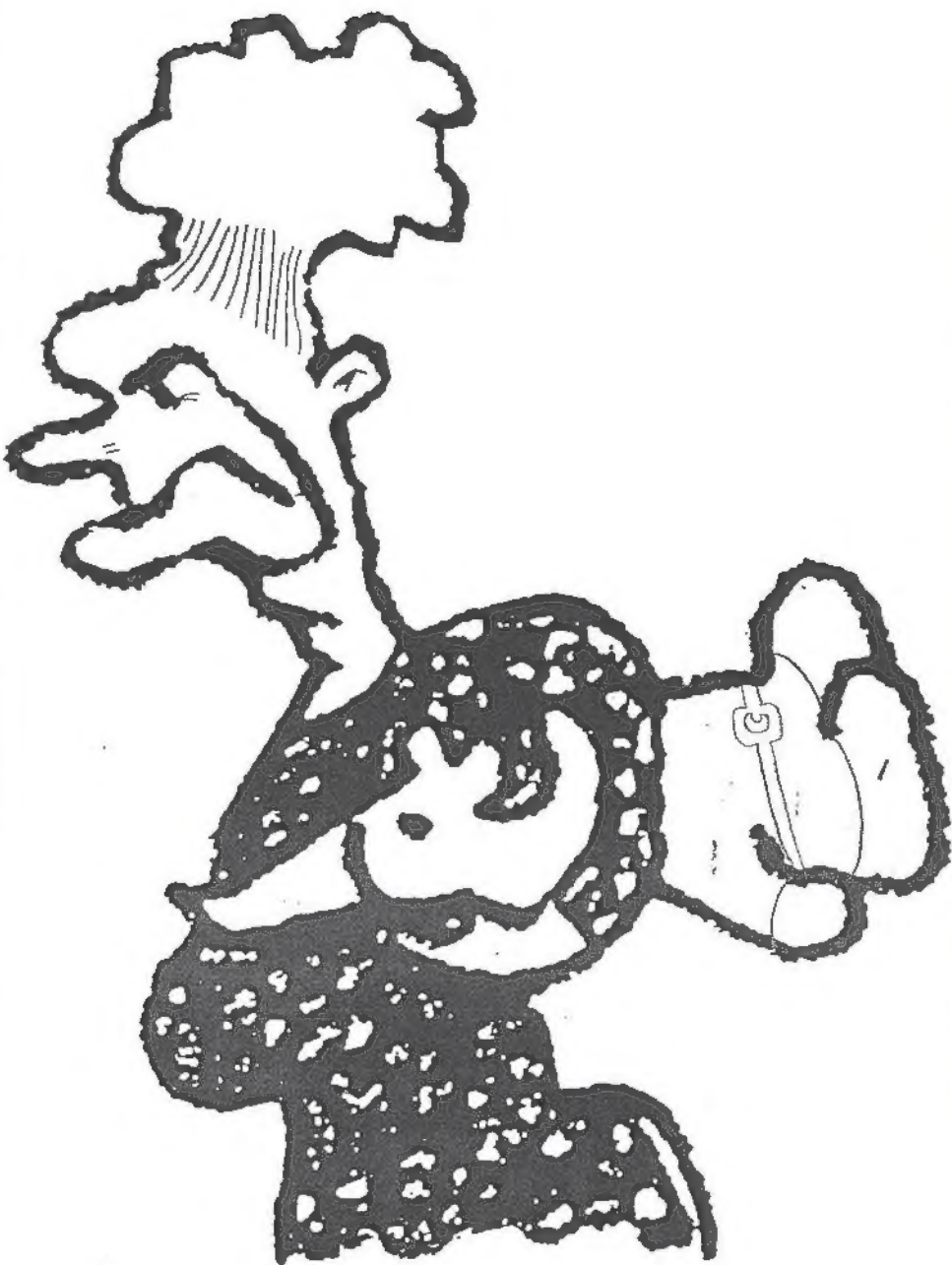
We call this Council member "Puff and Toot." The "Puff" comes from his being puffed-up with self-importance. The "Toot" stems from his flatulence problem. And it is a problem. This guy emits a little sound with each step. Heh. Wait, it is a serious medical condition. Hee-hee. And he is, as he will tell you, a **very** important man who has won many civic awards. Chuckle. So don't be getting personal and ... Bwaaaaaa-hahahahahHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!!!





In the late 1960s, every City Council meeting would start with the Pledge of Allegiance. For reasons I have never understood, this would always be followed by the McElfresh quindecaplets singing their almost-too-reverent rendition of "Ballad of the Green Berets." In their spare time, all 15 McElfresh boys liked to dress in camouflage and search for lost and undetonated Japanese balloon bombs that were floated over our part of the State in World War II. In 1970, 14 of the brothers went to Seattle and became hippies. But by the 1980s they were all employed at the "Lazy B Ranch," otherwise known as the Boeing Company. The 15th brother, Micky McElfresh, went feral and ran off to the hills. And if you listen hard at night you can pick out his call in the coyote chorus.





Another Council member, Agnes Googybugg, had two special issues that propelled her to public office.

First, her favorite elf lawn ornament was taken. In fact, some criminal ring of lawn ornament thieves went on a lawn ornament spree and basically cleaned out the entire town of lawn ornaments. This event was called, oddly enough, the Great Lawn Ornament Caper. The police were baffled, and it was only through Agnes' determined and unswerving private investigation that the case was solved. That in itself is another story, and if you remind me I'll tell you about it some day.

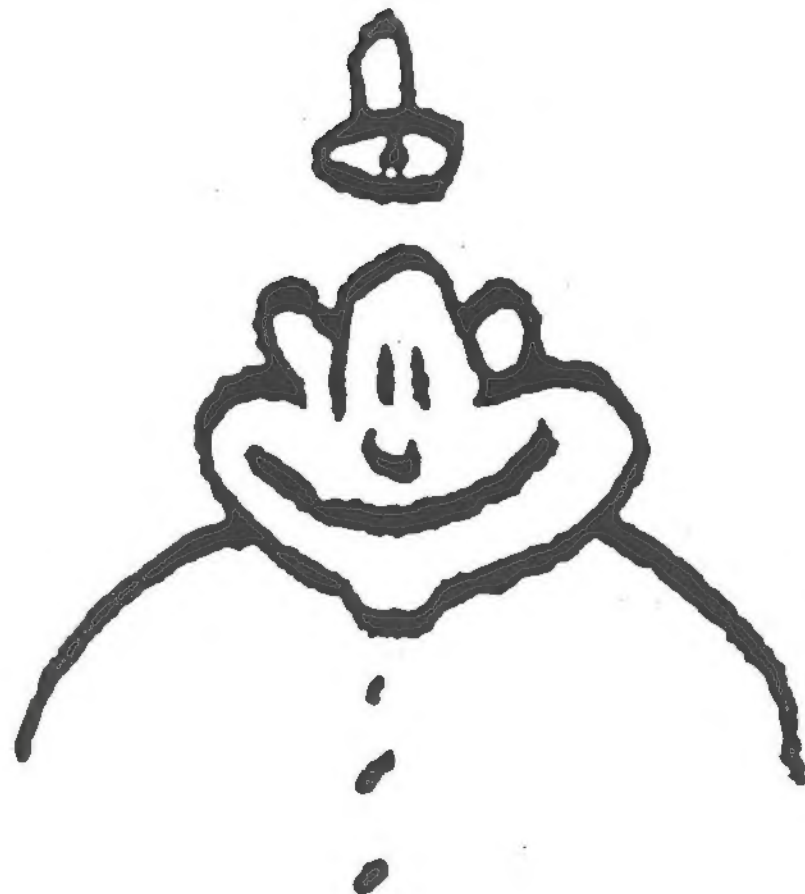
Anyway, all the elves, donkeys, flamingos, plywood fat people bending over, upside-down plastic Chlorox bottles cut into windmills, frogs on toadstools, etc., were gathered at City Hall and everyone came to claim their lawn ornament. And they were really steamed about it too. All the victims of the theft came and left at the same time, creating a parade of angry looking people carrying cheerful and happy icons. It was almost as fun as watching the Mountain Beaver Festival parade.

And at the head of this parade was Agnes. This was the springboard to her political career.

She had a second reason for running. The previous incumbent was her then (now ex-) husband, Gordon "Gooby" Googybugg.



Today you'll find Gooby down at the "Head Loader."  
 "You know the part where Shakespeare said, 'Hell  
 hath no fury like a woman scorned'?" he'll ask.  
 "Well, he should've left off the word 'scorned' and  
 that would about cover it." Needless to say, the  
 epic of the Googybugg vs. Googybugg race for  
 City Council will keep Bezango entertained for years  
 in the telling and retelling.



The culprits in the Great Lawn Ornament Caper had  
 to go to Winnehutt to be jailed. The Bezango Jail, called  
 "The Crowbar Hotel" by locals has one cell. This lone  
 room has been occupied by the same guy for several  
 years. No one can remember what minor law was broken  
 by Walter Peabody, but he won't leave. He'll tell you he's  
 a dangerous, bad man who really needs to be kept safe in  
 a cell with three square meals a day in order to protect  
 the good people of Bezango.





Grady Sneedmoss goes to every City Council meeting and sits in the back row. He never takes off his coat, and since he walks a considerable distance in the rain, he is always wet and musty, sitting in a pool of personal runoff. At random intervals he'll utter a stage-mutter, "BULLSHIT!" Just loud enough to hear, but not loud enough to stop the action. Actually, it isn't all that random, since he usually makes this statement when "Puff and Toot" is bragging up his accomplishments, or when "Handy" Nixon seconds a motion.

This goes on for about 45 minutes, with old Grady muttering "BULLSHIT" about every 3 or 5 minutes. Mayor Thiessen's face will get redder and redder and he'll finally get snippy, pointing his folded umbrella at Grady,

"Now Mr. Sneedmoss, we appreciate your desire to contribute to this discussion, but the time for public concerns and input will be later on this agenda, so until then I must ask you refrain from expressing your opinion."

The meeting will drone on and Grady will be mostly quiet, although if you sit next to him you can hear his "bullshit" whisper. Then Mayor Thiessen will finally say, "Now Mr. Sneedmoss, did you wish to make a public comment?"

Grady will then stand up, and say in loud and confident voice, "BULLSHIT!" and then sit down. Sometimes he is the only person at the meetings other than the Council and Mayor. And it is the same routine every week.

Back in 1980 when Mt. St. Helens blew up and this part of Washington was covered in that heavy white/grey ash, Bezango had three distinguished visitors. Gov. Dixy Lee Ray, Sen. Warren Magnuson, and President Carter were touring the damage as they flew over these hills in a helicopter. I suppose we can now reveal that they had engine trouble and were forced to land in the Homer T. Bone High School playing field. As you can imagine, it caused quite a commotion. Never had a governor, senator, or president set foot in Bezango before. A long time ago a congressman got lost and somehow found himself in Bezango, but we won't count that.

Anyway, the only guy in town who was enough of a mechanical genius to deal with a broken helicopter was Buddy Dragon. He went at that chopper with both sleeves rolled up and with a little coat hanger wire and duct tape, fixed it right up. The power trio were able to go on their way.

A couple months later, Sen Magnuson was able to award Bezango with a giant crane for loading major ocean ships, which is rather unfortunate since our town is landlocked up in the hills. But the Warren G. Magnuson Memorial Crane really looks good out there in the field.

We keep Gov. Ray's portrait up in City Hall and President Carter's in the Post Office to this day as reminder of that big moment. Buddy died about 10 years ago, but the statue of him we erected in the park will keep his memory alive.







Simon Rattlipp, the attorney for City Hall, sometimes wakes up with "bad head" days.